

What is claimed is:

1. A multi-beam scanning device, comprising:
 - a light source that emits a plurality of light beams;
 - a polygonal mirror that deflects the light beams emitted by said light source to scan; and
 - an optical system that converges the deflected light beams on a plurality of objects to be scanned, said optical system including an optical path turning system that turns optical paths of the deflected light beams, respectively,
 - said optical path turning system being configured such that optical path lengths of the optical paths of the deflected light beams are the same,
 - said optical system including an $f\theta$ lens group including at least a first $f\theta$ lens, a second $f\theta$ lens and a plurality of third $f\theta$ lenses, a number of said third $f\theta$ lenses corresponding to a number of the objects, all the light beams deflected by said polygonal mirror passing through said first and second $f\theta$ lenses, each of the plurality of light beams passing through said first and second $f\theta$ lenses passing through a respective one of said plurality of third $f\theta$ lenses; and
 - at least one of the optical paths upstream of the third $f\theta$ lens including an optical element that reflects a light beam along a path in a direction away from the object, such that a linear distance of the beam from the object initially increases.

2. The scanning device according to claim 1, wherein said first $f\theta$ lens converges the light beams mainly in an auxiliary scanning direction that is perpendicular to a main scanning direction in which the plurality of light beams scan.

3. The scanning device according to claim 1, wherein said second $f\theta$ lens converges the light beams only in a main scanning direction in which the plurality of light beams scan.

4. The scanning device according to claim 1, wherein each of said third $f\theta$ lenses converges an incident light beam in a main scanning direction in which the light beams scan and in an auxiliary scanning direction perpendicular to the main scanning direction.

5. The scanning device according to claim 1, wherein more than half of the optical paths are configured such that the beam reflected by the optical element is directed in a direction away from an object prior to being directed towards the object.